

**Edwards Statement on House Passage of the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act**

(Washington, D.C.) – U.S. Representative Chet Edwards released the following statement as the House passed H.R. 1, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Plan:

“Today, I supported House passage of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Plan, a much-needed economic recovery plan to combat our nation’s severe recession. At a time when our nation faces the most severe economic crisis since the Great Depression, we must act now to pass a bold economic recovery plan that protects American jobs, stabilizes our economy, and prevents this crisis from deepening.

The U.S. economy has lost 2.6 million jobs over the last year, the biggest drop since 1945. Nearly 1 million jobs have been lost in the last two months alone. That is approximately 17,000 jobs lost every day. In Texas, the unemployment rate increased by 43% from December 2007 to December 2008 (4.2% to 6%). Some might choose the Herbert Hoover do-nothing approach, but I believe inaction is a dangerous option that could lead to a more severe recession or even a depression. This bill will provide a \$500 tax credit for 95% of all working Americans, double the Texas highway construction budget, and will put thousands of Texans to work modernizing our schools, VA hospitals, and roads.

And there is not one earmark in this bill. Not one.

There is significant funding in the bill for Texas to create jobs and improve infrastructure, and return taxpayer dollars to working families.

Some examples of funding and tax cuts Texans will receive under this bill include:

- \$3 Billion for Transportation & Infrastructure Investment for 853 “ready to go” highway and bridge projects in Texas.
- \$3.8 Billion for education funding that will modernize school buildings, increase Pell Grant awards for college students, and improve technology resources at our schools.
- \$5.1 Billion to reduce the number of uninsured in Texas under the Medicaid program
- Nearly 8 million (7,981,000) Texas taxpayers would benefit from the Making Work Pay Credit of up to \$500 per worker, \$1000 for married couples.
- An additional 1.7 million children in Texas will be eligible for the child tax credit of \$1000 on their parents’ taxes under this legislation.

This bill will positively impact our sagging economy.

A new report from the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office (CBO) Report says this economic recovery plan could increase Gross Domestic Product anywhere from 1.3% to 3.6% by end of 2009. The CBO report estimates that this bill could create 800,000 to 2.1 million jobs by end of 2009, and 1.2 million to 3.6 million jobs created by the end of 2010. Some are concerned the funds won't be spent fast enough to stimulate the economy.

The non-partisan Congressional Budget Office report says two-thirds of the funds will be spent by the end of fiscal 2010, producing a "noticeable impact on economic growth and employment"

146 leading economists – including five recipients of the Nobel Prize for Economics – sent a letter to Congress calling for the quick passage of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to stabilize our weakening economy. Prominent economist Mark Zandi, chief economist with Moody's Economy.com and former adviser to Sen. John McCain's presidential campaign, just released an analysis of this bill that concludes that there will be 4 million more jobs and an unemployment rate that is 2 percentage points lower by the end of 2010 than without this plan.

As Chair of the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Subcommittee, I am responsible for crafting the portion of the economic recovery plan that invests \$6 billion for military construction, and \$1 billion for VA facilities. The funding provides for much-needed jobs through targeted investments to improve the quality of life for our service members and veterans, support the National Guard and Reserve, and assist economic development assistance in local communities. As we begin our work to stabilize and strengthen the American economy and preserve our way of life, we must also honor those veterans and military families whose sacrifice and service to this great nation are vital to the preservation of our democracy. We honor these brave Americans and their families with better health care and housing, with better child care and other facilities. We are creating jobs with this bill, but we are also creating something lasting for those brave Americans who asked for nothing but the opportunity to serve.

Military construction, like all other non-residential construction, will create and sustain jobs—28,500 jobs per \$1 billion spent, according the Associated General Contractors of America.

For military construction, we provide the following nationwide:

- Hospitals: \$3.75 billion to recapitalize our aging military hospitals and ambulatory centers.
- Child care: \$360 million for new child development centers on base.
- Guard/Reserve: \$400 million for the Guard and Reserve to support our reservists who have been so heavily deployed in recent years, as well as helping States who need Guard units for disaster assistance and homeland security.
- BRAC: \$300 million to speed up environmental cleanup associated with the first four BRAC

rounds. The Department estimates a roughly \$3.5 billion backlog in cleanup, and this funding will help local communities redevelop those lands.

For Veterans Administration Facilities, we provide:

- **Veterans Medical Facilities:** \$950 million for veterans' medical facilities. The Department has identified a \$5 billion backlog in needed repairs, including energy efficiency projects, at its 153 medical facilities.
- **Veterans Cemeteries:** \$50 million to put people to work making monument and memorial repairs at cemeteries for American heroes.

In addition to stimulating the economy and creating jobs in Texas and across the country, this funding will also serve those troops, veterans, and their families who sacrifice everyday on behalf of this nation. There aren't any lobbyists running around asking for this money to help our military personnel and their families. This money will provide jobs and serve those who serve us.